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## Aaron Broussard used office to secure large sums from Jefferson Parish contractors, prosecutors allege

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By **Richard Rainey, The Times-Picayune**

Former Jefferson Parish President **Aaron Broussard** used his public office to secure hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting and finder fees from companies doing business with the parish, according to a document filed in federal court today in connection with his ex-wife's **guilty plea in a payroll fraud conspiracy**.



John McCusker/The Times-Picayune

Former Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard, left, and his attorney, Robert Jenkins, arrive at the federal courthouse in New Orleans today.

The allegations are contained in a section entitled "Broussard uses his public office for private gain" in the "factual basis" for his ex-wife Karen Parker's **plea deal** with federal prosecutors.

The document alleges Broussard received hundreds of thousands of dollars from 2004 to 2010 in the form of consulting, retainer and finder fees from unnamed parish contractors and vendors.

Broussard also received income from a holding company with investment property in Canada that was partially funded by individuals and firms doing business with the parish while Broussard was president, according to the document. (Read the **factual basis**.)

The document also said Broussard contacted former Parish Attorney Tom Wilkinson and another unnamed parish

official about finding a parish job for Parker.

Parker pleaded guilty to failing to report a felony in the payroll fraud conspiracy that has enveloped Broussard and Wilkinson, both of whom have pleaded not guilty to conspiring to award Parker a lucrative parish job in 2003.

Parker's admission came in a plea agreement with federal prosecutors and suggests she could testify against one or both of her co-defendants.

A grand jury charged all three in December with 33 counts of conspiracy, wire fraud and theft of federal money in connection to Parker's dubious employment in her ex-husband's administration.

Broussard and Wilkinson are due to appear in court this afternoon for a status hearing about their cases.

Wilkinson had hired Parker, a former Parish Council employee, as a paralegal supervisor in October 2003, after Broussard was elected parish president. Wilkinson then erased a three-month gap in her parish employment record, during which Parker was working for Broussard's campaign. That move let her continue to collect benefits connected to longevity.

Parker was transferred to the Eastbank Regional Library in March 2004 to process parish employee identification cards. A bill of information filed last week by prosecutors states that Parker never fulfilled her duties as an ID processor and was still collecting the higher salary of a paralegal supervisor, even though she wasn't certified for that job.

In exchange, according to the indictment, Broussard granted Wilkinson an 80-percent boost in salary.

Broussard and Parker were dating while he ran for parish president. They married in May 2004 and divorced in October 2009. Broussard resigned amid scandal in January 2010. Parker was soon fired, and Wilkinson resigned that March.

Parker's guilty plea is the first in a multifaceted federal investigation of Jefferson's government under Broussard's administration. Subpoenas have also been issued in recent years for information about an insurance agency run by the wife of Broussard's former top aide, Tim Whitmer, and a now-defunct arrangement to ship most of Jefferson's residential garbage to the privately owned River Birch landfill in Waggaman

*More to come later today on **NOLA.com** and Wednesday in The Times-Picayune.*

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